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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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UNTIL THE LATTER'S MANDATORY RETIREMENT IN THREE YEARS.

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REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT.

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15. (C) TO PERSUADE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY THAT HE WILL NOT WORSEN THE BUDGET DEFICIT BY SPENDING IRRESPONSIBLY ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS, SERPA RECRUITED SEVERAL HIGHLY RESPECTED BANKERS TO HELP FUN HIS CAMPAIGN. TO DEFEND HIMSELF FROM CHARGES HE IS A DANGEROUS "GUERRILLA SYNPATIZER," HE IS HAVING A RESPECTED FORMER ARMED FORCES COMMANDER CHIEFLY LOBBY A SCEPTICAL MILITARY. TO SHORE UP HIS COUNTERNARCOTIC CREDENTIALS, HE WORKED WITH CONGRESS TO REINSTATE EXTRADITION AND HAS MELDED THAT SUPPORT FOR ERADICATION AND OTHER US-SPONSORED PROGRAMS.

16. (C) THE CONTESTATION. FORMER ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL BLODORN IS SECOND IN IN FORTS AND A NOBLESS CRITIC OF SERPA. BLODORN IS RUMMING AS AN INFLUENTIAL AND APPEALS TO MANY COLOMBIANS' DESIRE FOR A STRONG LEADER. THOUGH HE HAS THE SOURCE OF OLD ALLEGATIONS OF TIES TO PARAMILITARY GROUPS, HE ADVOCATES A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE GUERRILLA PROBLEM AND A CLEAN SWEEP OF NARCOCORRUPTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

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17. (C) GOALS:

18. (C) COLOMBIA'S PRESIDENT TO FIGHT

19. (C) ELEPHANT CANDIDATE AND SANPERA PROTEST: SERPA'S RECORD IS STILL THE KEY TO SEAT AS CAMPAINING FOR THE 2002 ELECTION OF COLOMBIA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS IN BELL WEATHER.

20. (C) SERPA, FOR MONTHS THE PRESUMPTIVE NEXT PRESIDENT, HAS CONSISTENTLY BOOTTED 20-30 PERCENT SUPPORT, MORE THAN ENOUGH TO POSITION HIM AS THE MAN TO BEAT IN JUNE 21 SECOND ROUND CHALLENGE. SERPA'S RUNOFF OPPONENT WILL HAVE TO DRAW TOGETHER THEORETICALLY DIVERSE, AND OFTEN ANTAGONISTIC, ANTI-SERPA FORCES TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF STOPPING HIM. WITH THE COST OF CAMPAIGNS ESCALATING, MONEY IS A WORRY FOR ALL CANDIDATES: THEY ARE SCRUTINIZING CONTRIBUTIONS CAREFULLY TO AVOID THE STIGMA THAT HAS BEDEVELLED PRESIDENT SAMPER. SERPA, PRESIDENT SAMPER'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER AND INTERIOR MINISTER, WAS OFFICIALLY EXONERATED IN DECEMBER OF CHARGES HE HELPED COVER UP SAMPER'S 16 MILLION IN NARCOCORRUPTIONS.

21. (C) POPULAR POPULIST AND SAVVY POLITICO. SERPA HAS SUPPORT FROM THE LOWER CLASSES AND THE DOMINANT LIBERAL PARTY, WHICH SELECTED HIM AS THE OFFICIAL CANDIDATE AND PARTY PRESIDENT AT A JANUARY 25 CONVENTION. THOUGH LESS IMPORTANT IN THE BIG CITIES, THE PARTY MACHINE WILL BE INVALUABLE IN GETTING OUT THE VOTE IN THE PROVINCES. A SELF-DESCRIBED "CENTER-LEFTIST," SERPA IS A CONSUMMATE CAMPAIGNER. HE HAS PLEDGED TO PURSUE A NEGOTIATED

SETTLEMENT WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND IMPLEMENT A STILL UNDEFINED "DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIAL CONTRACT" THAT WOULD EMPHASIZE SOCIAL PROGRAMS WHILE REDUCING INFLATION AND STIMULUS GROWTH.

22. (C) TO REACH BEYOND HIS CORE SUPPORT AND WIN IN THE SECOND ROUND, SERPA KNOWS HE MUST OVERCOME HIS HIGH NEGATIVE RATINGS. THOUGH STILL DEFENDING THE RECORD OF THE SAMPER ADMINISTRATION, HE HAS BEGUN TO CRITICIZE IT MILDLY FOR SHORTCOMINGS ON NARCOCORRUPTION, PURSUING PEACE, AND

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23. (C) MEXICO: THE PRI'S 2000 ENDGAME

24. (C) PRESIDENT ZEPEDILLO FACES AN UNPREDICTED CHALLENGE TO THE TRADITIONAL EIGHT OF THE NEOLIBERAL INCUMBENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO NAME HIS PARTY'S NOMINEE TO SUCCEED HIM. PUEBLA GOVERNOR BARTLETT HAS ALREADY DECLARED HIS CANDIDACY. BARTLETT'S ASCENDANCY ALLETS REBELLION WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PRI) AGAINST ZEPEDILLO'S EFFORTS TO REFORM THE PARTY AND SEPARATE IT FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

25. (C) OPEN CAMPAIGNING FOR THE PRI PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, HERETOFORE TANTAMOUNT TO ELECTION, TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN TABOO. THOUGH HOPEFULS JOCKEYED FURIOUSLY FOR POSITION BEHIND THE SCENES, THE ACTUAL CHOICE WAS FINALLY UP TO THE INCUMBENT AND EVERYONE OUTFUDGELY FELL INTO LINE. THIS PROTOCOL WAS BREACHED SLIGHTLY IN 1994 WHEN

MANUEL CAMACHO BOLTED THE PRI AFTER FAILING TO GET THE NOMINATION, BUT NOW—TWO YEARS BEFORE THE END OF ZEPEDILLO'S TERM—BARTLETT HAS CAST ASIDE THE UNWRITTEN RULES BY MAKING HIS OPEN (IE STILL OFFICIALLY UNDECLARED) BID.

26. (C) LAMEDUCK ALREADY? BARTLETT'S GAMBIT, MOST RECENTLY IN THE FORM OF AN ENDORSEMENT BY A KEY LABOR CENTRAL, SUGGESTS HE BELIEVES ZEPEDILLO'S AUTHORITY WITHIN THE PARTY IS SO WEAKENED THAT HE CANNOT PUNISH SUCH AN AFFRONT. ZEPEDILLO'S EFFORTS TO REFORM THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND SEPARATE PARTY FROM STATE HAVE ANGLED PRI-TRADITIONALISTS WHO HAVE NURSED RESENTMENTS AGAINST THE PARTY'S LONG-DOMINANT, TECHOCRAT WING (WHICH HAS PROVIDED THE LAST THREE PRESIDENTS). IN A CLEAR CHALLENGE TO THE TECHOCRATS, THE "POLITICOS" IN 1996 IMPOSED NEW PARTY REQUIREMENTS ("PADLOCKS") FOR CANDIDATES, INCLUDING LENGTH OF PARTY SERVICE AND PREVIOUS HOLDING OF ELECTIVE OFFICE.

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LAST YEAR'S MIDTERM ELECTIONS CONFIRMED THE IR OPINION OF
ZEDILLO'S [REDACTED] WHEN THE PARTY WAS TROUNCHED
IN MEXICO CITY AND LOST ITS MAJORITY IN THE LOWER HOUSE OF
CONGRESS.

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21. (C) (REF ID: ARIELLE WAS THE FRONT-RUNNING
POLITICO FOR THE 1994 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION BUT LOST OUT
TO THE (UNNAMED) CERDOS SPINES. [REDACTED]

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22. (C) RECENTLY HE ENFORCED THE PAN BY PASSING A BILL

GIVING HIM THE AUTHORITY TO DISTRIBUTIE FEDERAL FUNDS TO
POORER FEDERAL MUNICIPALITIES (CONTROLLED BY THE PES).
EFFECTIVELY SHUTTING OUT MEXICO CITY AND OTHER URBAN
MUNICIPALIOS RUN BY THE PAN. THIS MOVE HAS BECOME A NATIONAL
ISSUE. THE PAN, WHOSE VOTES WERE KEY TO PASSING ZEDILLO'S
BUDGET, IS UPING TONE AND THREATENING TO CEASE ALL
COLLABORATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION.

23. (C) ZEDILLO'S HARDLINE STANCE HAS BOOSTED HIS
STRENGTH WITH THE TRADITIONALISTS, WHO SEEM SEATED BY THE
INCOMING ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION. INCLUDING SOME
REPORTS OF TIES WITH KARZISTAFF (CENSUS) THAT HAVE HAULED
ZEDILLO DOWN YEARS. HE HAS BLOCKED THE PAN TO SEAT FOR THE
2000 NOMINATION.

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